

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
MAU Service Support Group - 38  
2d Force Service Support Group (Rein)  
Fleet Marine Force Atlantic  
Camp Lejeune, North Carolina 28542

DEL/dps  
4000  
1 Sep 1981

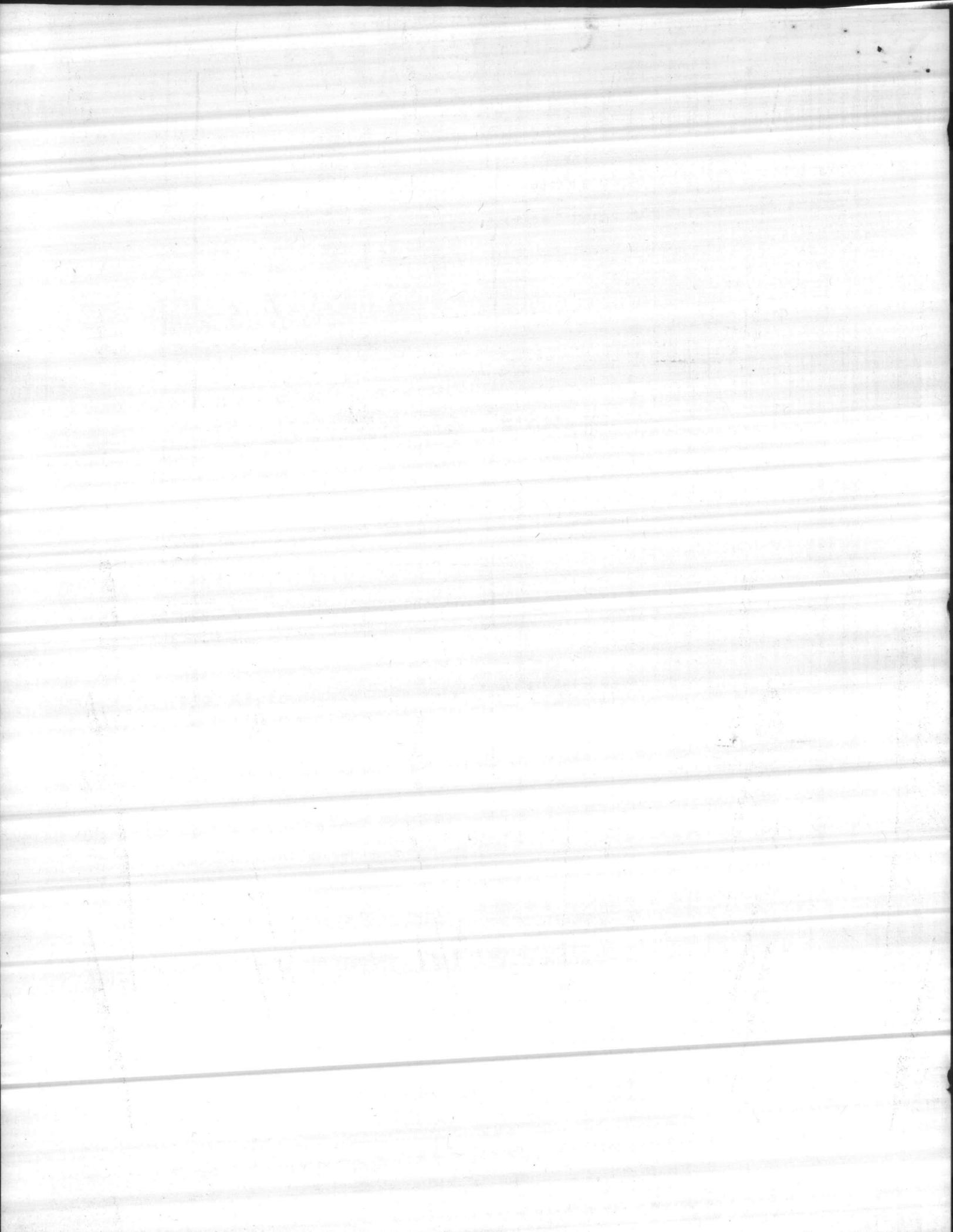
From: Commanding Officer  
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Amphibious Unit-38

Subj: MSSG-38 After Action Report

Encl: (1) Embarkation  
(2) Operations  
(3) Communications  
(4) Supply Operations

1. In accordance with the reference enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted.

*D. E. Long*  
D. E. LONG  
By direction



## EMBARKATION

**Problem:** The assignment to shipping restricted the capability of the MSSG to provide flexible combat service support.

**Discussion:** Assault support must always remain the primary consideration in assignment to shipping. However, considerations must be given to the ability of the MSSG to provide sustained support for the landing force.

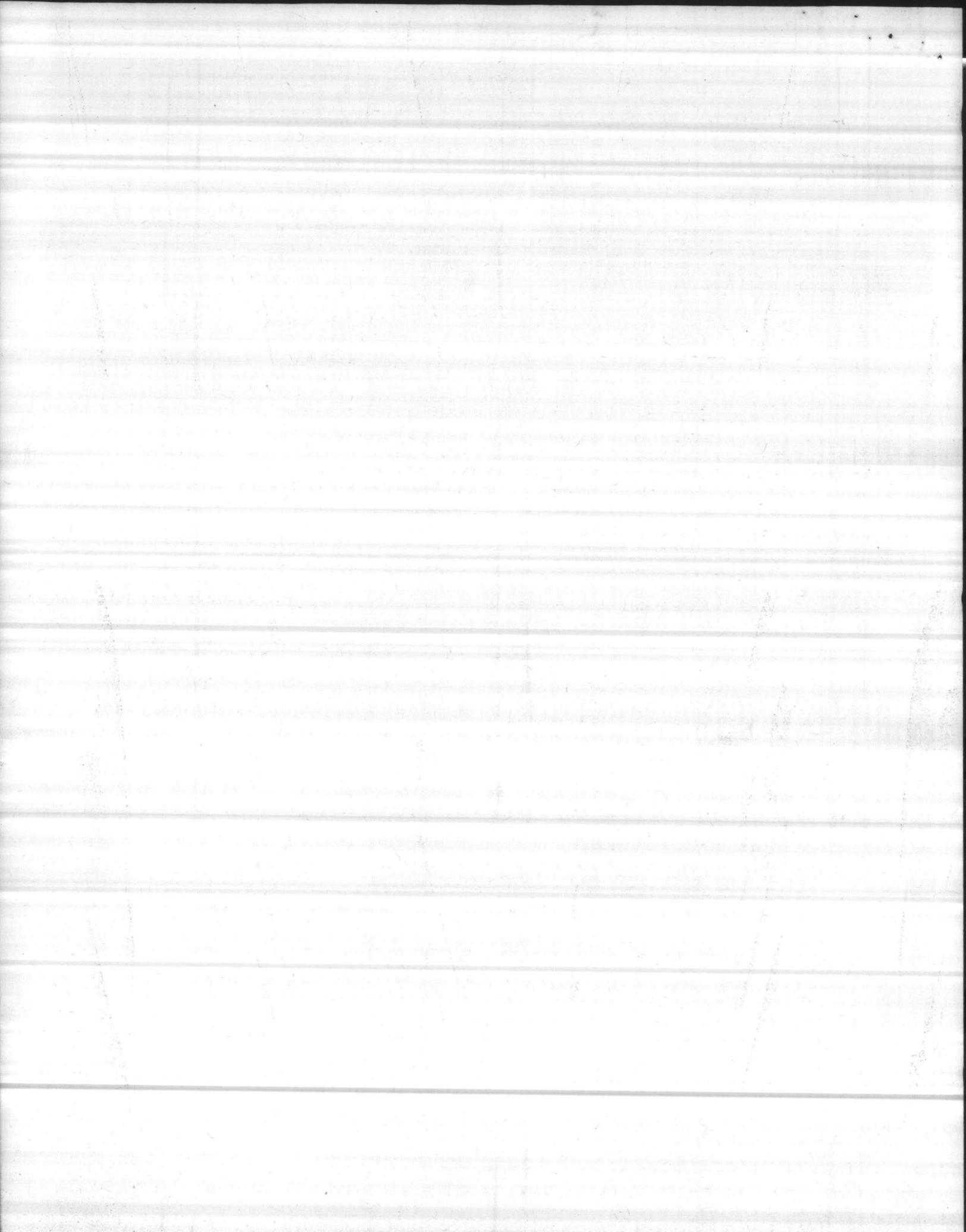
The MSSG was embarked aboard the USS Fairfax County (LST 1193). Cargo and flexible vehicle access was extremely limited on the IST. Further limitations were imposed with the embarkation of causeway sections. The causeway sections limited the capability of the MSSG to conduct helo operations aboard the IST.

Because of the loss of the USS Fort Snelling during the movement to AOA the MSSG HQs was moved to the USS Fairfax County (LST 1193). Available troop communications was limited. Deck mounting of MSSG communications equipment was necessary to provide adequate communications with the landing force but, still limited coordination between the MSSG and other MAU elements.

**Conclusion:** When embarked with causeway sections the IST is not an adequate shipboard platform for providing flexible combat service support.

**Recommendation:** The embarkation plan must support the landing plan. The concept of combat service support which supports the concept of operations must be considered during embarkation to provide the flexibility of providing the required support at the right time and place.

The MSSG must be assigned to shipping which allows the flexibility of utilizing both surface and helo transportation. Positive control and access to embarked supplies is required in providing responsive support.



## OPERATIONS

**Problem:** TACLOG was virtually non-existent due to the lack of coordination prior to the operation.

**Discussion:** The USS Austin was designated the Primary Control Ship (PCS) for the original operation. The USS Guam was redesignated as the PCS for the shortened operation. TACLOG representatives from the BLT staff failed to receive the PCS change thus making TACLOG ineffective.

**Conclusion:** TACLOG procedures were not coordinated prior to embarkation:

**Recommendation:** That more detailed planning of TACLOG procedures be done prior to embarkation. TACLOG procedures and communications should be rehearsed thoroughly with all personnel involved in TACLOG functions prior to embarkation.

**Problem:** Due to the extreme heat conditions on Vieques, water resupply was critical but was not scheduled until H + 12.

**Discussion:** Each Marine landed with three meals and two canteens of water. Weather before the operation was cool with little humidity. There was little thought given to water resupply.

On D-Day most Marines were out of water by 1300 because of high temperatures and high humidity. With only 2 jeeps, limited helo and amtrack assets ashore transportation of 5 gallon water cans was slow and ineffective. Water bulls (M149) were not brought ashore during the operations due to strict requirements concerning washdown operations.

**Conclusion:** Adequate planning was neglected for water resupply/distribution.

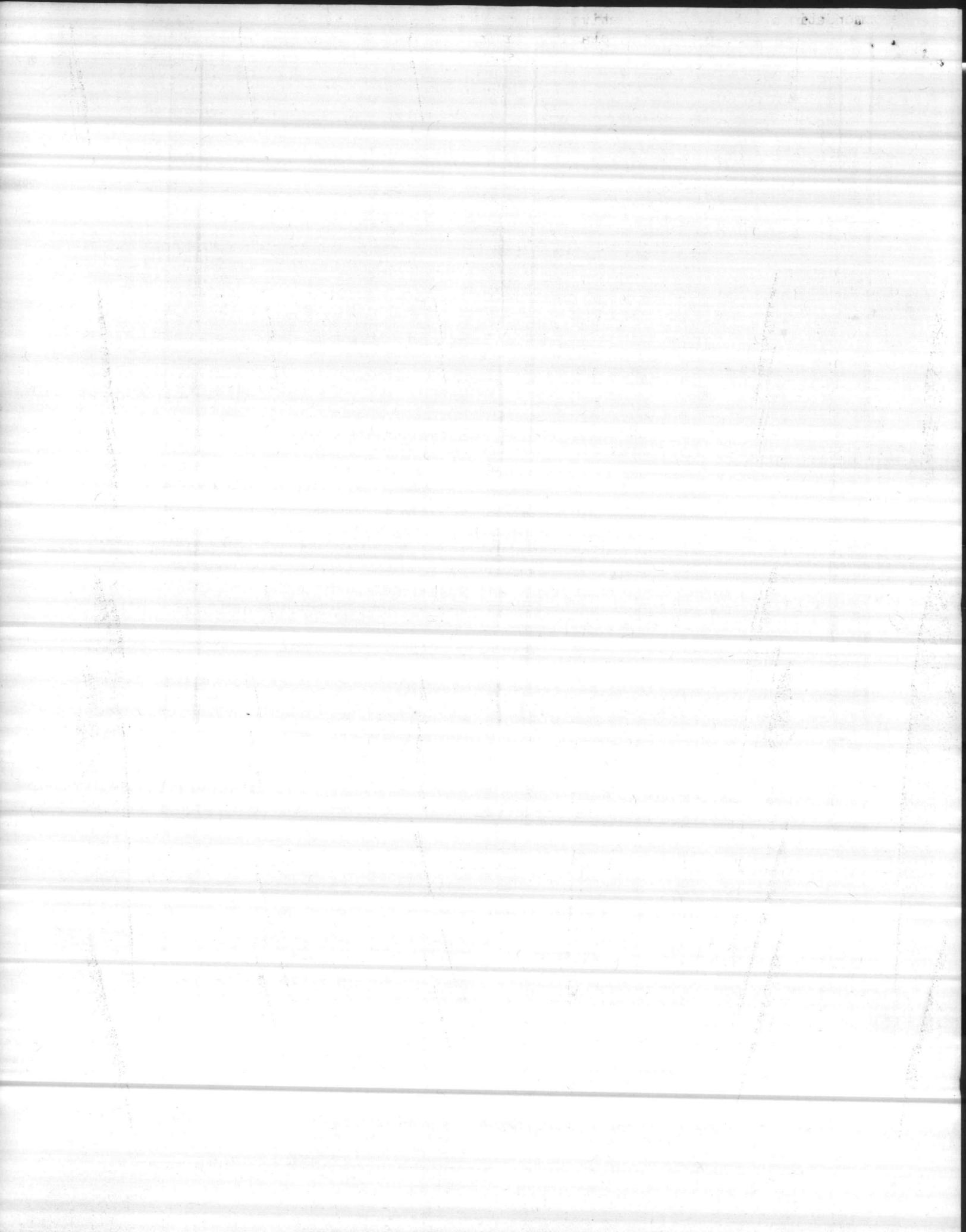
**Recommendation:** CSS planners at all levels must be involved in determining CSS requirements. Environmental data must be considered and contingency plans must be made to ensure a flexible CSS concept. CSS planning is continuous and must be validated to reflect any changes in the scheme of maneuver or environmental data.

**Problem:** The BLT/MAU and MSSG were separated for nearly 1 week with no communication except for the Detachment, 2d LSB of the MSSG.

**Discussion:** Due to the loss of the USS Fort Snelling a reconfiguration of the ships was necessary to execute the landing plan. Embarked troops and vehicles aboard the Fort Snelling were embarked aboard various ships in the ATF. The MSSG headquarters was transferred to the USS Fairfax County and Det, 2d LSB was transferred to the USS Austin.

Due to communication difficulties there was limited communications between DET, 2d LSB and MSSG HQs. Contact with the BLT was maintained by Det, 2d LSB aboard the same ship. Close coordination between the BLT S-4 and the MSSG Det commander ensured a coordinated planning effort resulting in an efficient CSS plan.

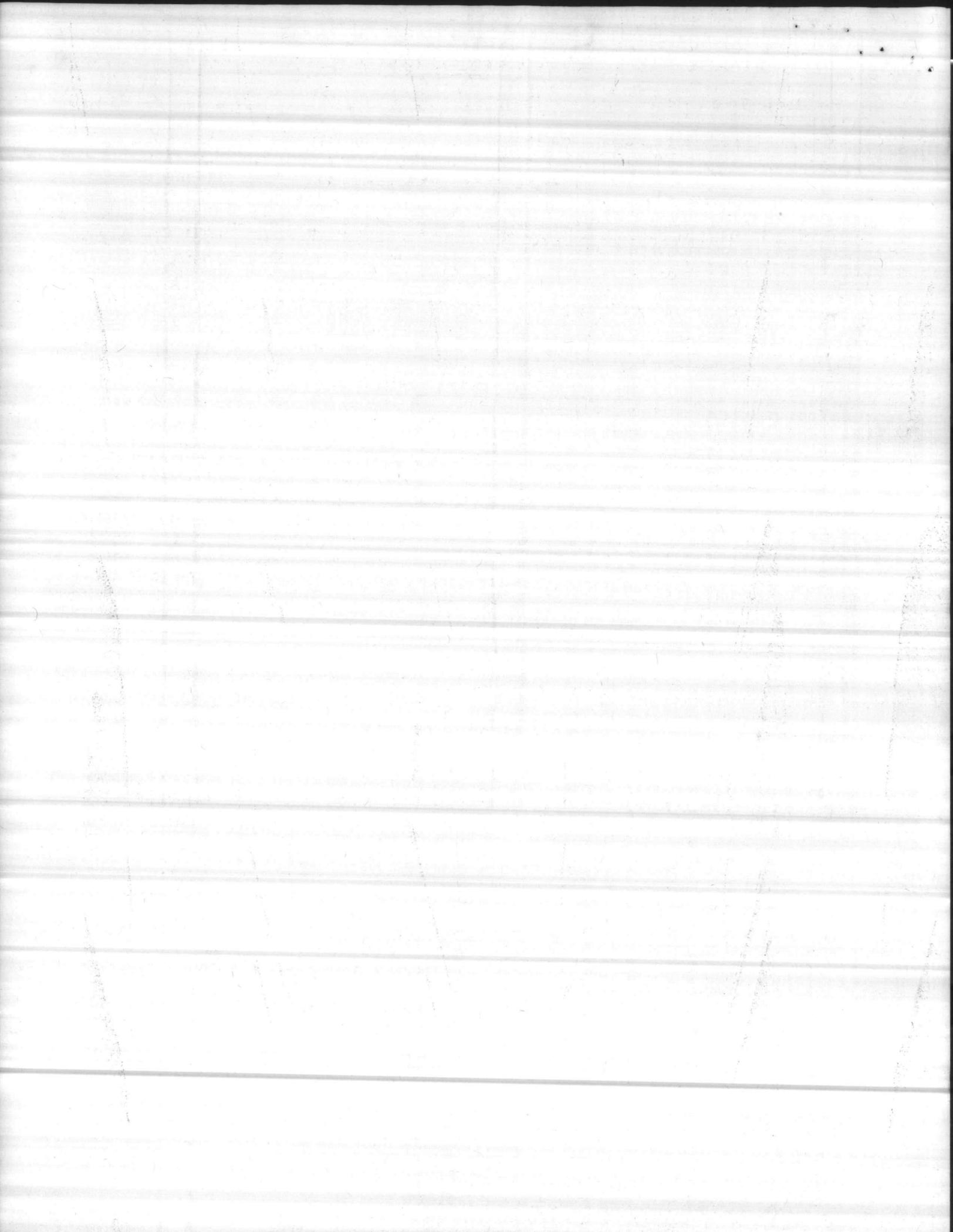
**Conclusion:** Proper liaison and communication is essential during the movement phase to ensure that planning is complete.



Recommendation: That a representative from the MSSG be embarked with the BLT staff to coordinate CSS planning during the movement phase.

(2)

Enclosure (2)



## COMMUNICATIONS

**Problem:** Incorrect communications information.

**Discussion:** Incorrect information was used in the Comm shift message for the MSSG. CTF 147.3 was used in the initial comm shift message vice CTG 147.3. This error delayed receipt of message traffic during the exercise.

Communication instructions for the reinforcement exercise did not give the time and date for the execution of the instructions. This led to unnecessary traffic in order to obtain the proper information.

**Conclusion:** Incorrect information delayed or caused unnecessary message traffic.

**Recommendation:** That more attention be paid in the future of insuring that all elements of the MAU are given proper information in submitting Comm shifts and in executing communication instructions.

**Problem:** Net Control.

**Discussion:** On more than one occasion, a spare frequency vice the one assigned was used for the Comm coordination Net. This practice caused confusion during the changeover of each new day because it was unclear rather to use the spare or revert to the regular frequency.

In addition improper radio procedures were constantly used. Personnel were constantly cutting in on transmissions causing delays in priority traffic.

**Conclusions:** Message traffic was delayed due to poor radio procedures.

**Recommendation:** Proper radio procedures should be published and rehearsed with all MAU radio operators. Daily changeovers should be conducted only after all personnel have been properly informed of the designated frequency by Net Control.

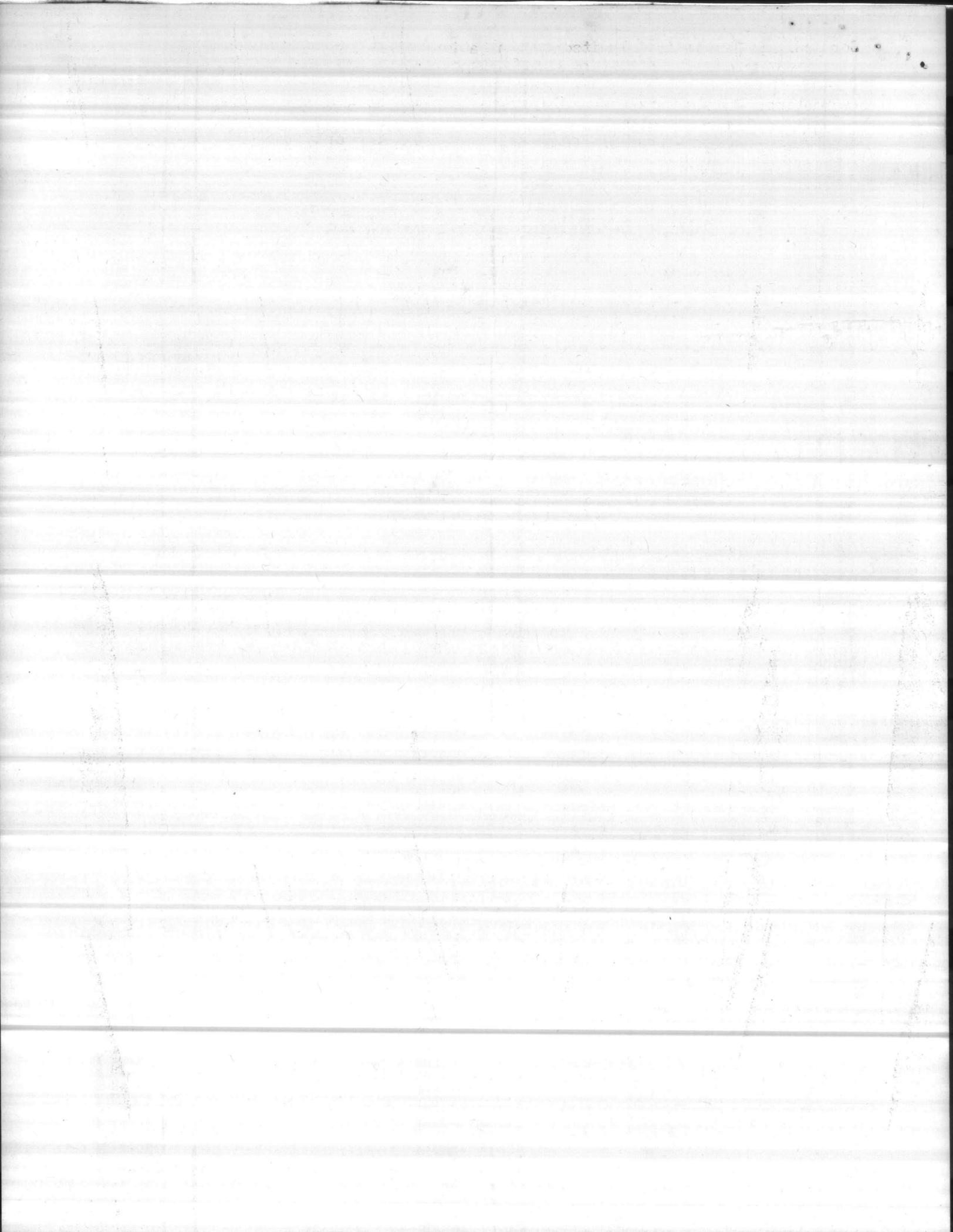
**Problem:** Assigned ships were unable to adequately support the communication requirements of MSSG-38.

**Discussion:** A VHF net (covered) was rarely available aboard the USS Fairfax County. The ship was configured with four KY-8 systems. Two of the four systems were faulty and could not be repaired. The only alternative was to deck mount a PRC 77 and KY-38.

At first the Navy rejected this idea due to the tempest regulations. However, deck mounting was approved and worked fine.

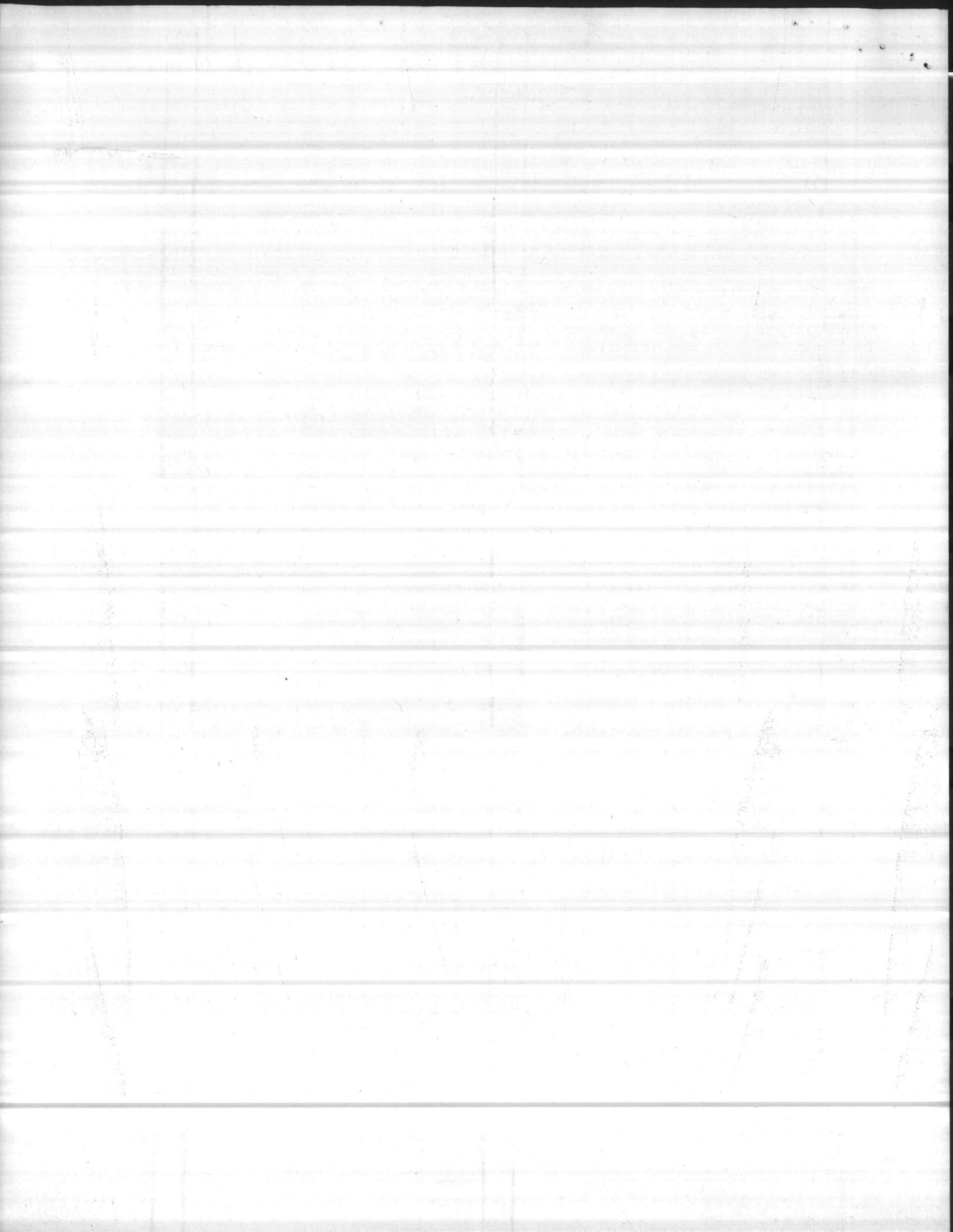
The inability to use HF nets lower than 8MHz would have severely limited the MSSG's capability if the operation had taken place as originally planned.

Enclosure (3)



Conclusion: Due to its' limited communications capability a LST is not an appropriate platform for a MSSG HQs.

Recommendation: In the future the MSSG HQs should not ne embarked on a LST. Headquarters elements of the MAU should be assigned to amphibious shipping which is capable of supporting communication requirements.



## Supply Operations

**Problem:** Indentification of supply requirements.

**Discussion:** Indentification of supply requirements started two months before deployment. FMFLANT directed a specially designed supply block based on 30 days usage vice a standard MAU block which has 6 months usage as a baseline. A consolidated MAU equipment density list was used as data for the Deployment Support Generator Package. This computer program provided a listing of repair parts by TAMCN for each end item. The quantity data on this list was meaningless because most quantities were less than one. This list was then presented to various MAU units and served as a shopping list. Various commodity managers increased or decreased, added or deleted items. This modified repair parts list was used to build the supply/maintenance float blocks of over 600 items.

Early assignments of the MSSG Supply Officer would have enabled a better validation/determination of requirements.

Almost immediately after embarkation requests were received from supported units for items not on the original requirements list.

The following observations are considered significant:

- (1) Over 90% of all indentified items were obtained prior to deployment within 2 1/2 week time frame.
- (2) Requests received-19 line items.  
Requests filled-12 line items.  
Items NIS at SMU-4 line items.  
Items not identified-3 line items.

**Conclusions:** (1) The concept of a specially designed block is valid and easily managed.

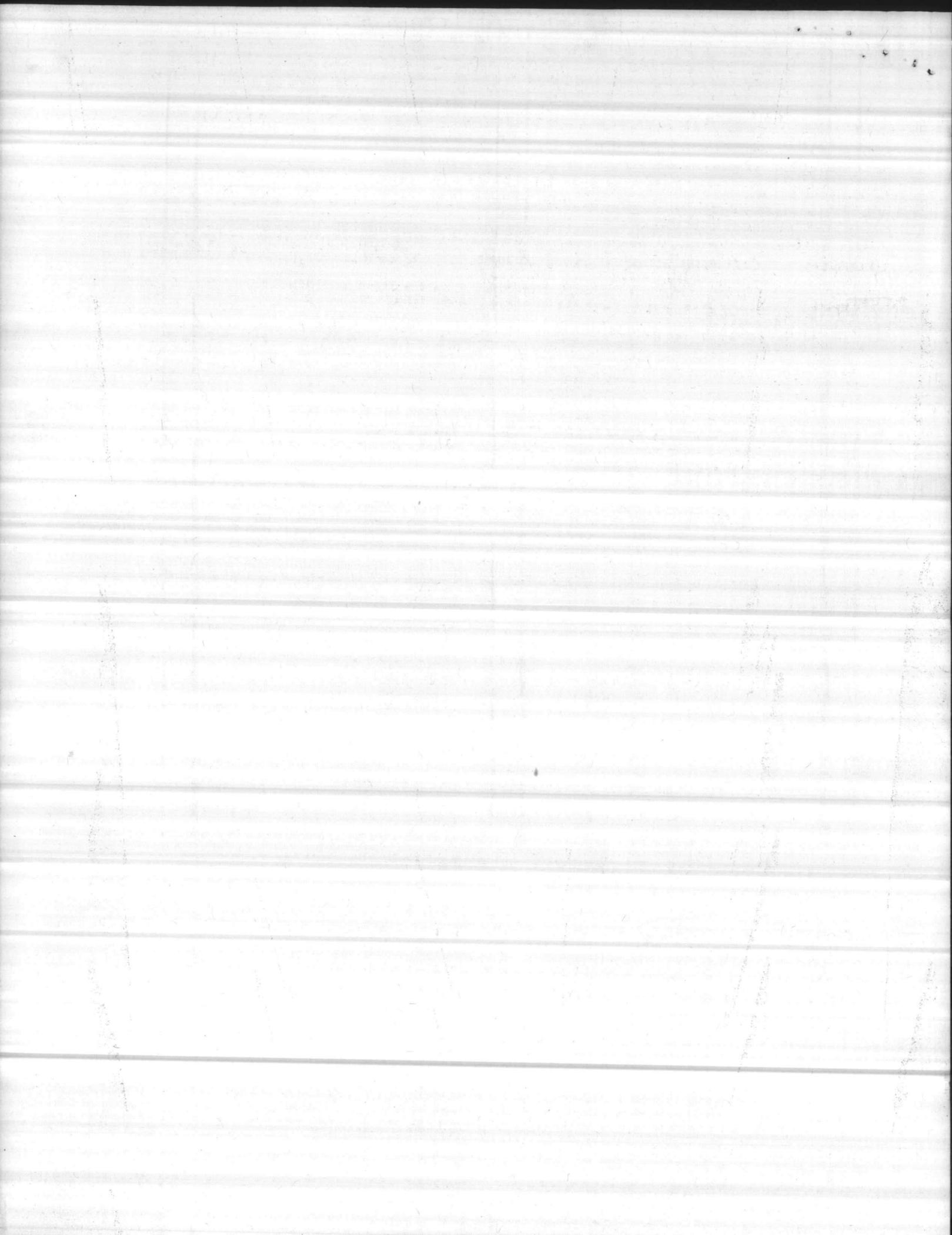
- (2) Satisfactory performance of the block required early assignment of a qualified Supply Officer and at least one SNCO and 3 enlisted supply men.

**Recommendation:** (1) That specially designed supply blocks be employed for short term deployments.

- (2) That supply personnel be assigned early to assist in determining requirements, building blocks, and validating requirements prior to embarkation.

**Problem:** Control and access of supplies.

**Discussion:** The MSSG has a sizeable volume of supplies. Decisions made concerning shipping assignments required that these supplies be spread loaded aboard every ship in the ATF. While spread loading of supplies is desirable, it was carried to extremes making control/access of supplies difficult for the MSSG.



Crowded conditions on the USS Fairfax County (LST 1193), which has very little palletized cargo storage area, precluded easy access to supplies. Even in the low intensity environment of the scaled down Ocean Venture Exercise access and delivery from a ship with no helo platform was extremely difficult.

**Conclusion:** The conditions aboard the USS Fairfax County would have made locating, segregating, and delivering supplies in a high intensity environment nearly impossible.

**Recommendation:** That more consideration be given to the embarkation of supplies to enhance the control and access.

**Problem:** Request for support.

**Discussion:** Annex P to the MAU OpOrder contained formats for requesting support from the MSSG. These formats ensure that all appropriate data is provided in order to consummate a transaction.

Only one request was received in proper format. This required unnecessary radio transmissions and much confusion in order to obtain information necessary to process the request.

**Conclusions:** Adherence to proper format, which ensures that all required information is provided, facilitates the provision of combat service support.

**Recommendation:** That the importance of standard formats be stressed and required combat service support procedures.

